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(AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

LOVE WINS: Jessica Chesnutt, visiting from Brooklyn with her wife for Pride weekend, cheers outside of City Hall in San Francisco Friday, June 26, 2015, following a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that same-sex couples have the right to marry nationwide.

Editorial: 'It is so ordered,' court says

When he was finishing writing the Supreme Court's 5-4 majority opinion in the case of Obergefell v. Hodges, Justice Anthony Kennedy had to know his words would be read at same-sex marriage ceremonies for generations to come.

“No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family,” concludes the opinion, which was announced Friday. “In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization’s oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right. The judgment of the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit is reversed. It is so ordered.”

Those words are the culmination of a decades-long battle for marriage equality in this country. The particular case is an amalgam of suits from Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee, challenging the bans on same-sex marriage in those states. Last November, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the petitioners, finding nothing wrong with these bans. Many had expected the Supreme Court’s ruling reversing the lower court’s decision, given the court’s refusal to hear appeals from the Seventh Circuit, which had the effect of allowing same-sex marriage in several states, including Indiana.

Kennedy based his majority opinion on the 14th Amendment, specifically the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses that stipulates the government may not “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

“In interpreting the Equal Protection Clause, the Court has recognized that new insights and societal understandings can reveal unjustified inequality within our most fundamental institutions that once passed unnoticed and unchallenged,” wrote Kennedy.

Today, we can all celebrate the promises our Constitution makes are now redeemable by all citizens, straight or not. It is amazing how slow progress seems to take most of the time, until moments like this happen and one can hardly keep up. But let us remember how much work we have left to do, and that marriage equality only came about due to the tireless efforts of so many who toiled for this day.